



Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee

Minutes

Date: May 18th, 2022

Time: 7:15PM

Location: Via Zoom conference

Attendees:

Executive committee: Christopher Tonkin (chair), Jack Johnson, Muris Kobaslija, Doug Mayo-Wells (secretary), Scott Smith (TAC liaison)

Town of Arlington: Daniel Amstutz (Sr Transportation Planner), Capt. Richard Flynn (Arlington Police Department, Operations Commander)

Members of the public: Linda Epstein, Len Greenberg, Mark Halliday, Roderick Holland, Petru Sofio (youth member-at-large)

1. Greetings and introductions, ground rules for online meetings

Christopher Tonkin advised that the meeting is held remotely related to COVID-19 measures adopted during the State of Emergency. Tonkin notified attendees that Committee secretary Doug Mayo-Wells is taking minutes; the meeting is being recorded for the purposes of verifying the minutes; and the recording will be deleted after the minutes are approved. Tonkin confirmed the committee members and others in attendance for the meeting.

2. Reappointment of Executive Board members

Scheduled for June 13 Select Board meeting. Added Petru Sofio as a non-voting youth member.

3. Approval of the outstanding minutes for previous meetings

Christopher Tonkin moves to accept minutes from April 2022

Muris Kobaslija seconds; roll call vote is taken

Motion carries, none opposed

4. Bluebikes latest update on Warrant article

Rod Holland advises that Bluebikes were removed from the consent agenda. Adam MacNeill spoke to the issue, addressing questions from Mark A. Kaeppelin (Pct 12). It is also important to make the point that Arlington's Bluebikes are integrated into the overall system and provide "last mile" transportation. There have been concerns about why Arlington is paying a for-private company for this service.

Daniel Amstutz explains that for-profit companies are paid to provide services to the public all the time, and clarifies that Motivate/Lyft is a 3rd-party operator of equipment that the Town owns.

5. Report from COBWEB Officer

Capt. Flynn advises that COBWEB (Cops on Bikes with Education for Bicyclists) have been active for a few weeks (since weather changed), and supported the bike donation event on April 30. Officers did a demo for the K-8 group, and another is scheduled for June. The focus is on enforcement and education for both cyclists and motorists.

Muris Kobaslija raises a concern about motorists frequently running the light at Lake St and the Bikeway during evening rush hour (approx 5:30), and asks if an officer could be stationed to warn drivers.

Capt. Flynn says this is possible, it would be helpful to know if there are specific days of the week.

Muris Kobaslija says this is daily.

Capt. Flynn observes that many people are in a hurry, both motorists and cyclists. He advises making eye contact with drivers if possible, and suggests that bicyclists should dismount and walk bicycles across roadways.

[Editorial note: Dismounting is not required at the Lake Street bikeway crossing. The committee understood Capt. Flynn's comment to refer generally to intersections in the Town.]

6. TAC (Transportation Advisory Committee) report

Scott Smith confirms that TAC is interested in jointly staffing a booth with ABAC for Town Day.

7. Dooring incident at Town Hall

Christopher Tonkin raises concerns about scheduling the repainting and repositioning of the shared lane markings in Town Center (where a student was recently struck by a car door in a hit and run crash near Town Hall) and in front of Arlington High School.

Scott Smith confirms that the shared lane markings in front of Town Hall eastbound are located too close to the curb (according to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)).

Christopher Tonkin moves to authorize Scott Smith to draft a letter to the Director of the Department of Public Works, Mike Rademacher, requesting that the shared lane markings be repositioned to the center of the travel lane (which is MUTCD-compliant). Christopher will send the letter on behalf of the committee.

Muris Kobaslija seconds the motion.

Motion carries, none opposed

8. Town Day

Christopher Tonkin has filled out the form requesting a booth.

Christopher Tonkin moves that ABAC allocate \$70 to pay for a Town Day booth
Jack Johnson seconds

Motion carries, none opposed

9. Mass Ave/Appleton Design Review Committee reconvenes

Daniel Amstutz advises that the next meeting is Tuesday May 24th at 7:30PM. The selected contractor, Stantec, will discuss their proposed approach and schedule and take feedback from the committee. The scope of this project is wider than the Mass Ave/ Appleton intersection, to connect it to land developments in the Heights (such as the redevelopment project at 1165R Mass Ave). An abutter and business stakeholder meeting is planned for June 7, and a public meeting for June 14 [note: the public

meeting was subsequently rescheduled to June 23 and moved to the Town Hall Auditorium].

Daniel Amsutz also mentions that the Town is applying for state grant funding via MassWorks to address some construction management and other issues requiring time and labor prior to construction. The grant application is due June 3, and a letter of support from ABAC would be beneficial. A template is available.

Daniel Amstutz clarifies the grant/funding and construction schedule. Funds from the current grant proposal would not be awarded until September or October; the design schedule (for road design and 100% construction documents) runs through spring 2023. We would therefore apply for construction funding in spring 2023, funding could be awarded in fall 2023, and construction could start in 2024.

Christopher Tonkin moves that he and Jack Johnson review Daniel Amstutz's template letter of support and send (with any edits).

Jack Johnson seconds

Motion carries, none opposed

Capt. Flynn mentions that APD is implementing temporary no-left-turn measures in advance of installation of permanent signage, which has been held up. He also asks if there has been consideration of signage to advise eastbound cyclists to moderate their speed on the downhill approaching the Appleton intersection.

Scott Smith confirms that it is certainly possible for a bike to reach the Town speed limit on the downhill, which is not that usual in Town. He had proposed a speed feedback sign, which would respond to both cars and bikes.

Linda Epstein observes that cyclists who have had a close call at the intersection are likely to moderate their speed. She agrees that a warning sign would be beneficial to people not familiar with the intersection.

Len Greenberg mentions that the risk of losing control of a bicycle due to excessive speed has actually been increased by changes to the bicycle path through the intersection and variations in elevation of the road surface.

Daniel Amstutz confirms that Green International's short-term concept did suggest speed feedback signage on the approaches to Forest street westbound and Lowell street eastbound. Pavement markings were installed, but the issue with the feedback signage and rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) was that the plan did not specify where they should be installed. This will be raised with Stantec. There is some question

as to whether it makes sense to install feedback signage now in advance of the complete plan.

Petru mentions that Jayson Gauvin (of Green International) cited specific locations, e.g. right by Dunkin Donuts at 1234 Mass Ave for Eastbound traffic; it might be helpful to review the minutes as well as raising with Stantec. Markings to locate the RRFB were laid down in January.

Linda Epstein advocates for installing the RRFBs sooner rather than later. Advance warning may be especially beneficial for E-bikes, which may require longer braking distances.

Christopher Tonkin and Daniel Amstutz recommend holding further discussion for the Mass Ave/Appleton Design Review Committee meeting.

10. ABAC funds use or lose. Come with spending ideas

Scott Smith relates a discussion on the history of the donated funds with former ABAC co-chair Alan Chachich. He may have physical records, but is traveling and currently unable to access them. Alan's recollection is that the gift was from the former Arlington Savings bank, earmarked for bike racks; Alan McClenen may have been involved in bike rack purchases. He also thinks that Bike Coalition for Massachusetts (now MassBike) may possibly have provided some funds earmarked for bike education.

Jack Johnson asks if there is a suitable place to store these old documents if Alan provides them; Daniel Amstutz confirms that record storage is available.

Jack Johnson recalls that Cambridge Savings bank helped pay for bike racks in front of their banks, but this was not connected with ABAC's funds. The money in the Town account was from a \$2500 grant from the Cutler West Foundation, and facilitated by Cutler West's niece, Nancy Peacock, who at the time lived in Arlington and attended ABAC meetings. Although we don't have documentation, we do have recollection from Joey Glushko and others on the committee at that time of where the funds originated. He suggests that ABAC write a letter mentioning our status as sworn-in Town officials and recommending ABAC retain control of the account. He notes that the donation was not to the Town, it was specifically to ABAC in support of its mission.

Christopher Tonkin summarizes the top recommendations of the working group:

- Applying to Bluebikes, if possible
- Installing signage (on the bikeway or elsewhere in Town)
- Open a new (not Town-affiliated) account to hold to the funds

Daniel Amstutz informs the committee the Department of Planning and Community Development director Raitt needs clarity on this as soon as possible because she needs to advise the Comptroller Cody before the end of the fiscal year. Operating money can't flow from year to year.

Jack Johnson asks what has precipitated a change in a longstanding arrangement.

Daniel Amstutz says he can't speak to the past, only the current situation, and doesn't think that the original source of funding is relevant.

Scott Smith mentions that there is a precedent for multi-year appropriations. He expresses concern about the potential misuse of funds which were given for a specific purpose and reiterates that there was originally no stipulation that the funds expired.

Christopher Tonkin states that the committee does not object to spending the money, but on committing too quickly to uses of the funds which may not be optimal.

Jack Johnson says that although the full committee has not voted, based on the work of the subcommittee, the committee would likely approve turning the funds over to the Planning Department, as they are most closely affiliated with ABAC, with the proviso that the funds could be applied to bicycle related matters over the next few years, such as bikeway signage and wayfinding.

Muris Kobaslija emphasizes Scott Smith's concern about spending the money against the will of the foundation that awarded it. He asks if any effort has been made to contact the Cutler West Foundation for guidance.

Christopher Tonkin and Jack Johnson have attempted without success to contact the foundation; Jack Johnson thinks it was likely a personal trust. He mentions that the original check was unsolicited, and that ABAC worked with the Town at that point to set up the original account. He reiterates that the funds have been used over the years for educational purposes as stipulated, such as purchases of bicycle-related resources for Robbins library, and community outreach expenses.

Christopher Tonkin mentions that ABAC has also generated income for the account, e.g, through T-shirt sales. He suggests that meeting with Director Raitt, possibly with other members of the subcommittee, may be helpful.

Jack Johnson advises that he has limited availability for the next week.

Daniel Amstutz advises that Director Raitt's last day is June 3rd.

11. Motorized bikes on the Bikeway

Christopher Tonkin summarizes the concern submitted by resident James Cartreine. He claims that E-bikes, particularly cargo bikes, are hazardous because they are large, heavy, and have a lot of momentum. Should their use be restricted on the Bikeway?

Christopher Tonkin also summarizes the committee's position: ABAC advocates for getting people on bikes, whether unpowered, powered, or pedal assist. There is also legislation working through the statehouse regarding how the Commonwealth defines e-bikes as distinct from mopeds. The vehicles are not inherently dangerous, but operators are responsible for their safe operation, as for any other user of the bikeway.

Muris Kobaslija expresses agreement, as well as the concern that restrictions on cargo bike usage may force people to use cars as an alternative, increasing traffic congestion.

Christopher Tonkin further mentions that Town guidance should not restrict the use of mobility assistive devices as covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Previous discussion has also indicated that it is not possible to set speed limits on the Bikeway as it is not classified as a public way.

Daniel Amstutz advises that the pending state legislation passed through the Joint Transportation Committee in April. MassBike has updates on the legislation, and concerned citizens can communicate with their legislators about it.

Christopher Tonkin suggests we keep this item on the agenda for next month, as there are questions about if or how the State legislation restricts individual communities from enacting local measures.

12. Tri-Town Meeting, save a date and agenda

Christopher Tonkin informs the committee that the intent is to hold Tri Town (Arlington, Lexington, Bedford) meetings three times a year; Lexington held the last, it's Arlington's turn next. Should we set a date, discuss an agenda? Should we set a separate date, or devote one of our monthly meetings to the Tri-Town meeting (as Bedford did). He also mentions correspondence received on matters impacting all three bikeway communities, such as signage.

Scott Smith asks if this meeting will be conducted remotely or in-person.

Christopher Tonkin expects that remote participation may make it easier e.g, for people from Bedford to attend.

June 22nd is suggested as a potential date, however a public meeting for the Mystic River/Minuteman Bikeway Path project is scheduled for that night, as well as an MBTA public meeting for bus network redesign.

Scott Smith observes that ABAC has often skipped either July or August meetings to allow for committee members' vacations, etc., and suggests devoting a summer meeting to Tri-Town, instead of skipping a month.

Christopher Tonkin suggests that any urgent Town business could be addressed before or after the Tri-Town meeting.

13. Development of new rubric for road markings, bike lanes with and without protection. Progress?

Scott Smith advises that the working group of Phil Goff (Everywhere Arlington Livable Streets), Petru Sofio, Daniel Amstutz and himself is meeting on May 19.

14. General updates from Daniel:

a. Minuteman Bikeway Planning Project update

Public meeting to be scheduled, possibly late June

b. Mystic River to Bikeway Feasibility Study update

Next public meeting June 22

c. Other updates

As mentioned above Jenny Raitt is leaving her position as Director of Planning and Community Development, she will be the Executive Director of the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (based in Lowell), and Adam Chapdelaine's last day as Town Manager is June 17.

Christopher Tonkin thanks Daniel Amstutz for his diligent work benefiting the committee. He asks if there is any information to share on who may be the new Director of Planning and Community Development.

Daniel Amstutz advises that the position has been posted internally, not sure about externally. His expectation is that assistant director Kelly Lynema will be acting director for some period of time.

15. Tales from the Bikeway, matters arising from the Bikeway

Nothing new to report.

16. Tracking “Scary Moments” as in Cambridge. Add a site to ABAC’s

See: <https://www.cambridgebikesafety.org/2018/01/21/scary-moments-project>

and

<http://thecreativeexchange.org/projects/near-miss-project.html>

Action item: Christopher Tonkin and Doug Mayo-Wells will discuss/refine the proposal.

17. Any other business

See: https://www.massbike.org/cpmr_22

Scott Smith mentions that the Charlie Proctor memorial ride is taking place on May 29, and is still looking for volunteers to assist.

Capt. Flynn confirms that APD is supporting the ride, it is a multi-jurisdictional event. He also added information on upcoming K-6 education events to the meeting chat as follows:

Next date for Arlington Community Education bike safety event is Saturday June 18 at the Gibbs School at 10 am. Officer Bryan White and other members of the APD Bicycle Unit will provide a fun and informative course on bike safety, proper hand signals, how to travel on bike lanes, the bike path, and general tips on how to ride safely to school and around town. For more information please visit Arlington.ce.eleyo.com or contact me directly at rflynn@town.arlington.ma.us

Christopher Tonkin suggests that Len Greenberg contact Petru Sofio regarding volunteering for the event.

18. Return to live meetings

Daniel Amstutz advises that the current extension of online meetings for open meeting law is through July 15. Public meetings in June for Mass Ave/Appleton will be in-person. He mentions that the only meeting room currently equipped for hybrid meetings is the Select Board chambers. Existing law allows members to call in, but a quorum must be physically present in the room. There is a group in town exploring broader support for

hybrid meetings, and tests will be run with some committees, possibly the Clean Energy Future committee. There are challenges with retrofitting existing rooms to support hybrid meetings.

Christopher Tonkin moves to adjourn

Scott Smith seconds

Adjourned